



Morning of the Rising Sun: The Heroic Story of the Battles for Guadalcanal

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Critical Praise

Editor's Review

When it comes to the Pacific theatre of the Second World War, *Morning of the Rising Sun: The Heroic Story of the Struggle for Guadalcanal* by author and historian Kenneth I. Friedman, Ph.D. is the quintessential guide to the epic and stirring tale of the six-month conflict between the United States and the Japanese Empire over the vital island of Guadalcanal. Located in the Southern Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal was in the direct path of the primary supply line between the continental United States and Australia-New Zealand; whoever possessed the island would control the direction of the war in the Pacific. Meticulously researched, the author uses a bipartisan approach to convey the great dedication and bravery of both the Allied and Japanese fighting men. His attention to detail provides an embracing journey through a series of the most ferocious land, air, and sea battles in the history of war.

Midwest Book Review

First, let me say...the writing of this book was a monumental undertaking and particularly well done considering its size and content. The book is 10"x7", 1 ½" thick, and weighs over 3 pounds – not light-weight bedtime reading for us gals, and that's the paperback edition. However, don't let its size intimidate you. This is a very personal, well-organized, thorough accounting of this lengthy battle.

Quoting from the back cover:

"Morning of the Rising Sun: The Heroic Story of the Battles for Guadalcanal by author and his historian Kenneth I. Friedman, Ph.D., provides a thorough and thought-provoking examination of this pivotal struggle fought between the US and the Japanese Empire during the early days of the Second World War. Like other earlier battles such as Verdun in World War I and Stalingrad in World War II, both sides sent every gun, airplane, and man they could spare to Guadalcanal to decide who would win. When the Americans evicted the last Japanese soldier from Guadalcanal in February 1943, the Japanese strategy shifted from the offensive to the defensive, and they began to lose territory. The Americans were now on the offensive and would not stop until they sailed into Tokyo Bay to accept Japan's surrender aboard the USS Missouri. Dr. Friedman is also the author of *Afternoon of the Rising Sun: The Battle of Leyte Gulf*."

"If you're a history buff or have a special interest in WORLD WAR II, I'm certain you will find this book worth your money and time. I particularly enjoyed the personal memoirs from that time period, the attack on Pearl Harbor and this lengthy struggle.

Kaye Trout- February 12, 2008

Rating: Excellent

Kirkus Reviews

A fastidious account of World War II's critical Battle of Guadalcanal.

Author and historian Friedman (*Afternoon of the Rising Sun: The Battle of Leyte Gulf*, 2001) pens an impressive, comprehensive treatise on what he views as the second World War's most pivotal battle. The island of Guadalcanal occupied a strategic position in the Pacific theatre, and military planners from both Japan and the United States believed it was key to controlling the region. When the confrontation began in August 1942, the outcome of the war in the Pacific was very much in question, if not entirely leaning in Japan's favor. The Japanese were clever and aggressive foes, the first to put significant numbers of men and a base on the island. But, as Friedman shows, they vastly underestimated the Americans' resolve and presence in the region. From their dominant position in the Pacific arena, the Japanese were eventually reduced to a defensive crouch, a mind-set that plagued them for the remainder of the war. A natural storyteller, Friedman's account of the conflict is told in a compelling, narrative fashion that deftly pulls the reader through the book's hefty page count.

He does an excellent job analyzing both the micro—and macro—aspects of the battle, smoothly switching between the intimate conversations of military leaders and the historical and political implications of an American victory in the war. Friedman is also careful to present a balanced, non-nationalistic approach to the conflict; the Japanese military is frequently portrayed as a cunning foil to the Americans' more headstrong forces. Maps, charts and even diagrams of planes keep the pages moving and will wet the tongue of any amateur military strategist. It's a thoroughly, enthusiastically researched book that can only come from the desk of a true connoisseur of military history.

An impressive, meticulous and enjoyable must for any history buff's bookshelf.

Tin Can Sailors

At 702 pages, *Morning of the Rising Sun* is not the type of book you'd pick up casually but it is the kind of book that once you pick it up you'll find very hard to put back down. Ken Friedman has found a way of taking dry facts and figures and the myriad details of conducting warfare and making them come alive for the reader. His depth of research is astounding right down to the names of individual pilots of American and Japanese aircraft, often providing details of what they were thinking during combat actions. Friedman's bibliography and copious end notes show careful and painstaking research that will satisfy the most dedicated historian while the descriptions of the actions and the decisions behind them – on both sides – will please any reader of military non-fiction.”

The strategic importance of Guadalcanal to both the Japanese and to the Americans has seldom been so clearly detailed as in *Morning of the Rising Sun*. The Japanese, after strategic losses at Midway and Coral Sea, were desperate to find a way to cut off Allied supply lines from the U.S. West Coast to Australia. A military airfield on the island of Guadalcanal in the extreme

Southern Solomon islands would serve that purpose well. For the Americans, taking and holding that airfield for our own use meant a forward base for launching attacks against Japanese-held territory in the rest of the Solomons chain. It was a must win for both sides and for the Americans it was both far from any U.S. military assistance and the fighting came at a time when the Europe First assessment was depriving Nimitz and MacArthur of needed ships, planes, manpower and materials.”

Morning of the Rising Sun is the kind of book that students of WWII history will want to have on their libraries’ shelves for reference both because of the importance of the battles for the Southern Solomons and for Ken Friedman’s treatment of them.”

Terry Miller
Executive Director
Tin Can Sailors

Readers' Reviews

Tom Carlson - Long Prairie, Minnesota

I've had a fascination with the Guadalcanal Campaign since I was in high school and I read "Guadalcanal Diary". This was increased when I discovered that my 1st cousin had been a pilot flying SBD's out of Guadalcanal. Thus when I saw that another book had been written about my favorite campaign I had to have it. "Morning of the Rising Sun: The Heroic Story of the Battles for Guadalcanal" by Kenneth I. Friedman didn't disappoint me. The book contains a lot of information on the battles and it lays it out in easy to understand fashion. Using charts and maps he brings what order there can be to the battles fought mostly in the dark in thick jungles or on the seas in a narrow passage between islands called "The Slot". Although the editing gave me a few troubles I found that his style of writing entertaining and fast to read.

Richard Davis - Riverside, California

I really enjoyed your book. For me it was very easy reading, it gave a good prospective of both sides: the victories, defeats and the hardships. The way you spaced the story out on each page made it enjoyable/easy to read. I also enjoyed the way you spoke about the leaders on both sides giving some of their background and their decision making. The book made my year in Viet Nam look like a cake walk. Good job . . . I'm looking forward to your next one.

Casimiro Tadeo Ciupalski - Madrid, Spain

I enjoyed the book "Morning of Rising Sun: The Heroic Story of the Battles for Guadalcanal". The battles were the crucial turning point in Pacific War and the end of the Japanese initiative. The author Kenneth Friedman has done a superb job of describing the naval battles that took place between the Americans and Japanese off the Guadalcanal. This book was well written with detailed information and nice maps and charts which help to understand the naval battles.

Tom Hickox - Baton Rouge, Louisiana

This reader has had an interest in the campaign since reading Guadalcanal Diary as a lad and I have read any number of books since, but this is the first that ties everything together, dots the "i"s and crosses the "t"s. The naval action has always been something of a mystery to me, but Dr. Friedman had done a marvelous job by and large with charts depicting the various actions.

Additionally, both the Allied and Japanese perspectives are presented without the bias one often sees. Dr. Friedman does a remarkable job presenting the personalities of the Japanese commanders.

The chronology is seamless and one switches from ground action to naval to air with little

effort on the reader's part. He is also adept at going from high level Allied conferences to the cockpit of an aircraft to the bridge of a ship giving a great sense of what it must have been like to be there.

Having served in the Field Artillery in the Cold War Army, I found Friedman's account of its use, supply, and effects right on. I got the feeling of being right there watching.

I particularly liked the charts of the naval actions and their position alongside the text describing the action. Dr. Friedman manages to keep these complex operations in perspective in a manner that facilitates understanding.

The book is massive as other readers have pointed out, about seven-hundred pages. Once I picked it up, I had a hard time putting it down. A first printing, I picked out four or five typos (Author's comments *corrected in latest version*), so the rate was less than one per hundred pages, excellent I would say.

This was a campaign that is often overlooked in favor of more glamorous actions. Friedman brings it to life and ties the various parts together particularly well.

Casimiro Tadeo Ciupalski - Madrid, Spain

I enjoyed the book "Morning of Rising Sun: The Heroic Story of the Battles for Guadalcanal". The battles were the crucial turning point in Pacific War and the end of the Japanese initiative. The author Kenneth Friedman has done a superb job of describing the naval battles that took place between the Americans and Japanese off the Guadalcanal. This book was well written with detailed information and nice maps and charts which help to understand the naval battles.

Dick Clark - Bella Vista, AR

Ken, what a great book. You should feel a very large degree of satisfaction. Tough reading but I'm hanging onto every word. It is good writing when the reader is anxious to see what is on the next page when he already knows what the results are.

Jeffrey Means - Simi Valley, CA

I want to commend (the author) for his book. I will recommend it to anyone I talk to.

He did (a fine job writing about) Guadalcanal and the memory of these kids who took on a military machine that hadn't been stopped (except by the Russians led by Zhukov at Nomonhan in 1939) and proved that we mean it when we say Don't Tread on Me! And the amazing thing, amongst all of it, is the small loss (of life among) US Marines . . . when you realize they were there for 4 months, with few supplies at times, against a cagey adversary whether from land, sea, or air or pestilence and disease. I salute Ken's effort.

I really have been wanting to know the real facts about this battle, and this book really helped me get to that point. Other books I have read just were bare bones, but one certainly can't call Ken's book bare in any detail. I have read many books on Guadalcanal, and Ken went the distance with research in this epic, which Guadalcanal was. He seemed to really do the sea battles well and . . . really did the land battles well. . . .

On a scale of one to five (stars), I would give this book a 6.

David McClure - San Francisco, CA

Morning of the Rising Sun is the compelling story of the first major Allied combined land, air and sea offensive in the war in the Pacific. Historian and author, Dr. Kenneth Friedman, spent six years extensively researching and painstakingly writing the first draft of this sweeping trip across the battlefields and into the minds and motivations of the combatants ... and it shows. It unflinchingly depicts the deadly details of the war in the jungles, waters and airspace that made up the struggle for control of Guadalcanal.

Dr. Friedman brilliantly lays out the political and cultural underpinnings of that bloody six month donnybrook with the meticulous clarity of an accomplished historian while at the same time taking the reader into the minds, motives and personal experiences of warriors from both sides with a novelist's sense of story. This is an eminently readable and thoroughly enjoyable delineation of the fascinating details of the conflict that changed the course of the war.

Guadalcanal stopped the advance of the Japanese across the Pacific and created momentum that would take the Allies from blood soaked island to blood soaked island all the way to Japan. Hastily organized, audaciously launched and uncompromisingly fought, its outcome was tenuous and uncertain until the very last days and, but for a few propitious moments that we euphemistically, in hindsight, call the fortunes of war, it could easily have turned out differently. And that would have dramatically altered the course of the war.

This book is a valuable addition to our understanding of the causes of conflict and the nature of both victory and defeat, a testament to the honor and courage of those who believed in their cause and fought on both sides. Anyone interested in military history, political history or the very personal nature of war without quarter will find Morning of the Rising Sun a productive investment of their time and a fascinating read.

John L. Willis, DDS - Yuba City, CA

Just a quick note to tell you how much I thoroughly enjoyed your book. I have read Frank, Leckie, Hammell, Feldt and others and rate yours at the top. Good work! Definitely a five-star rating.

William F. Andrews, Nambour, Queensland, Australia

I read your book *Morning of the Rising Sun* twice. The second round was even better.

Today the passage of time has dimmed the life of the unforgettable episodes of nobility, agony, despair and triumph. So little recognition is given to all who took part in the war at sea and also on the land in WW-II.

To this generation and the generations yet to come, let us remember the wartime sacrifice forever.

Jason VanOrsdol, Owasso, Oklahoma

The detail in your book is stunning. Now, I do see what my step-father means when he said he thought the book would be more a detailing of events, yet turns out to have the details and the human side.

Lee Huber, Whispering Pines, NC

I had two close friends that were involved in the land and sea battles of Guadalcanal. Dave was on the *Helena* starting at Pearl Harbor and Tom was a marine.

Dave's description of the sea battles could have been taken from your book, in almost all things it agrees with your book. He was an officer on the deck of the *Helena* when the *Juneau* was hit.

Tom was a marine and told of the terrible shelling they endured from the Japanese battleships.

Reading your book had me on the edge of my chair even though I knew the outcome. Your descriptions of the battles leaves me to wonder how were we able to hold on and win.

My friends are gone now but reading your book was almost as if I was hearing them tell about the battle. Thank you so much, your book brings history alive.

Jon Maguire – Brandon, Florida

Hi Ken. Love the books!! Your writing style is spellbinding. I am looking forward to the new work, so desperation is not called for. My dad served aboard USS Belleau Wood CVL-24 and was, of course, present at Leyte. The Pacific Naval campaigns are fascinating to me, partly for the personal connection. May your writings continue to flow and enlighten us.

Frank E. Albrecht, Riegelsville, PA

Thank you for the signed copy of “*Morning of the Sun.*” I have read many books covering wars in my lifetime. But, your book is “outstanding.” I am impressed with the detail and total information. I do indeed thank you from the bottom of my heart for this great labor of yours.

Louis Epperson, Missouri City, Texas

I believe I had seen this book when it first came out as a weekend page-turner, I was wrong; this is a tri-county phonebook. Thanks to Ken Friedman for scholarly work, especially if you are serious about the subject and are heading to War or Staff College. Delivery was fast, book was mint, and signed by the man himself.